

V-E Day: Just the Beginning

By BOYD LEWIS

What was it like, that day when Germany surrendered and all the guns shut down from Denmark to Switzerland, and weary soldiers thought "The job's done!" not knowing that it was just beginning.

What was it like that early May morning just 20 years ago when a shaken Nazi general scrawled "Jodl" on the articles that buried one Germany — while giving birth to another?

Twenty years! Enough to dim the details and yet reveal the great pattern of the tragedy. Too long we've looked upon the drama played out in the SHAEF war room at Reims as an ending. Only now we sense a deeper meaning.

As is customary on these anniversaries, those of us who were there must dust off old memories and finger yellowed clippings. For a few hours, perhaps, we may be forgiven for remembering the German surrender of May 7, 1945, as it was — a day of somber triumph, a day of joyful release and a

(Cont'd on page 4)

CLUB MOURNS ED MURROW

Edward R. Murrow, 57, died April 27 of lung cancer in Pawling, N.Y.

The noted radio and TV newscaster had been ill with cancer for some time. In October 1963, while head of the US Information Agency, he had one lung removed and felt recovered sufficiently to return to his post in Washington. The following January, he was forced to resign in order to complete his recuperation. In November 1964, he entered New York Hospital and again underwent surgery, only to become hospitalized once more last month for a checkup.

(Cont'd. on page 7)



V-E Day

Copyright 1945 by Bill Mauldin

"Th' hell with it. I ain't standin' up till he does!"

The Scoop Brought Down the House and Closed the War

By ROBERT BUNNELLE

The end of World War II in Europe came as a bit of an anticlimax to those who had sat in on it from its start.

As everybody involved remembers, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces press officers had set up a sortie to Reims for a group of correspondents, including AP's Edward Kennedy, chief of the Paris bureau, to witness the formal signing of the German surrender. When the correspondents returned to Paris, they were told they couldn't release their story until an official go-ahead on the basis of agreements between United States, Britain and Russia. Ed Kennedy argued that SHAEF had no right to hold up a story of such importance for purely political reasons, and he decided to get it out if at all possible.

We had discovered, and I am sure that SHAEF would have been horrified if they knew of its existence, that all you had to do to get in touch with a number in London was to call from your hotel room if you liked, and ask for Paris Military. When you got Paris Military, you asked for London Military. When you got London Military, you asked for the number you wanted in London. I think some of the *Stars and*

Stripes staff members used this channel to talk to their girl friends.

Anyway, when Ed decided the story was too big for censorship — and this is a question that was argued and will long be argued — he used this line to call the Associated Press office in London, which was the point through which all copy cleared to the United States and the rest of the world.

Actually, I wasn't in the office when the call came in. In a non-reportorial role, which was part of my duty as managing executive of the Associated Press in Great Britain, I was in conference in Reuters office with a group of London newspaper publishers and Christopher Chancellor, who was then managing director of Reuters. The associated Press offices were in the Reuters building, and the desk called me immediately to tell me that the surrender story was coming in. I told Chancellor and the publishers that the story was coming in and asked if Reuters had it yet. Chancellor checked and they didn't.

I then checked back with the desk to make sure that everything was in order, because I have always been a little bit gun shy of being too exclusive on a story.

The desk reported that there was no

doubt about the call being from Ed Kennedy, as his voice was identified by someone in our office who knew him, so I knew there was no phoney business about it. But, when time dragged on and we were still exclusive, I began to get a little worried. Then came the official announcement that no official announcement had yet been made with regard to the German surrender. We played back Kennedy's tape and found out that it was all in order, but obviously had skirted censorship. In fact, the story was broken off when he was about two-thirds through, censorship apparently having caught up with us.

We knew the story was right because Flensburg radio, which was under Allied control and which we monitored, was broadcasting the surrender to the German troops.

SHAEF officially took a lot of quick and temporary punitive steps against our Associated Press overseas operation; but I doubt, if on more mature consideration, they really were too angry about it. In fact, Kennedy, who was long suspended as a correspondent, ultimately was reinstated.

The official story was released the next day, and all of us heaved a sigh of relief.

In Paris Everyone Sang and Automobile Horns Blew

By CHARLES COLLINGWOOD

The end of the war in Europe, like a great many other historic events, was unofficial before it was official. Officially, it was announced at 3 p.m. on May 8, 1945. But that announcement was already an anti-climax for the correspondents attached to SHAEF.

On the 6th — a Sunday, if memory serves — 17 of us, chosen by the arcane considerations of military bureaucracy to represent the world's press, had been sworn to secrecy and flown to Eisenhower's headquarters at Reims to witness the German surrender. The secrecy was because the Russians had already started to act up and were insisting that nothing could be binding until they had held their own ceremony in Berlin on May 8. After waiting around the schoolhouse in Reims most of the night, the documents were finally signed at 2:41 in the morning of May 7. The war in Europe was over but the 17 correspondents who were there were forbidden to say so until May 8. Sixteen of us observed the embargo. One, Ed Kennedy of the AP, filed the story on the afternoon of the 7th.

There followed the most dreadful imbroglio. The members of the press who weren't at Reims felt themselves almost as badly betrayed as those who were there. The air at the Scribe in Paris was thick with recriminations. I still think Kennedy was wrong, but I have come to believe that the rest of us were too hard on him. Most of us signed a bitter and intemperate letter of protest to Eisenhower. I forget who drafted it, but we all put our names to it. It was an albatross around Kennedy's neck for the rest of his life. He was fired from the AP and, although he became managing editor of a paper in Santa Barbara, he had to justify himself until the day he died. I am inclined to think it was too high a price to make a man pay, even if he was wrong.

Anyway, by the time the official announcements rolled around on May 8, we had signed so many protests, answered so many angry queries from our home offices, and laid down so much advance copy, that we felt we had pretty well exhausted the subject of V-E Day. That was wrong, of course, because the public was interested in the event and

not the preoccupations of the press. And the public reaction was as deeply felt as if the signing had taken place at 2:59 p.m. on May 8 instead of at 2:41 a.m. on May 7.

In Paris, which had better reason than most places to celebrate the end of the fighting, the popular reaction was particularly moving. The weather was warm and balmy that May and vast throngs of people poured out onto the streets. The streets were full of people, as though no one wanted to be alone on such a moment as this. I remember being struck by the gravity of the crowds. They were happy and relieved and full of thanksgiving, but I do not remember them as being boisterous. However, one's memory can play tricks after 20 years. I talked to a French friend who was there and she remembers that everyone sang and blew automobile horns.

However it was expressed, no one forgets the quality of emotion. There was enough of that to stretch over twenty years. The memory of V-E Day still brings tears to French eyes this May 8, 1965.

Just the Beginning

(Continued from page 1)
day of professional controversy.

* * *

Thor Smith came for me at the Scribe Hotel, that incredible press headquarters in Paris. Thor was a lieutenant colonel on the staff of Brig. Gen. Frank A. Allen, SHAEF public relations officer. A sortie was being organized to fly to Reims, which was SHAEF forward, Thor said. Who did I wish to assign for the United Press?

All week long the Germans had been trying to surrender to the western Allies and hoping they could get us to join what was left of their forces and march eastward upon the Russians.

Never mind how interesting such an idea reads today. In the context of May, 1945, it was unthinkable.

So a sortie to Reims now must mean the end of the war. I instantly nominated myself for this story.

And so around the Scribe reasoned others that Sunday. Ed Kennedy, my AP opposite number, listed himself. Joe Kingsbury Smith of INS picked his fastest leg man, grizzled *Jimmy Kilgallen*.

(Few realize, even within our profession, how bitter was the rivalry for minute time advantage on war breaks among the three press associations. A one-minute spread on a flash could bring kudos or callbacks. Thus the final "press battle" was arranged to be a three-way donnybrook among the wire service men.)

In my dog-eared notebook I find listed the other members of the party which assembled in front of the Scribe to fly to Reims by C-47: Margaret Francis, Canadian Press; Gerald Clark, Canadian Broadcasting System; W. W. Chaplin, National Broadcasting Company; Paul Manning, Mutual Network; Osmar White, Australian Press; Jean LaGrange, Agence France Presse; Charles Colingwood, Columbia Broadcasting Co.; Price Day, *Baltimore Sun* man subbing for Exchange Telegraph Agency's ailing Andre Glarner; H. C. Taylor, Reuters; Herb Clark, Blue Network; Thomas Cadett, British Broadcasting Company; Michael Litvin-Sevoy, Tass; Sgt. Ross Parry, *Maple Leaf* (the Canadian service paper) and Sgt. Charles Kiley, *Stars and Stripes*.

When we got out to the airfield we picked up General Allen, Thor Smith, Lt. Col. Richard Merrick and Lt. Col. George Warden. The last two were SHAEF censors, Merrick American, Warden British.

The first words in my surrender note-

book read: "May 6, 1945. We're off to witness the end of the war."

As the C-47 "bucket job" rose over the rooftops of Paris suburbs, "Honk" Allen crouched on the floor in the middle of the plane and began to brief us. The position he took was directly between AP's Kennedy and myself.

He sketched the background. The previous day emissaries of the German government has met with SHAEF officers to discuss surrender terms. Terms had been forwarded to the temporary capital at Flensburg.

Instead of replying the Germans had sent another delegation through Monty's 21st Army Group lines to Reims. It was believed they were prepared to surrender.

Off the Record

Then Allen said gravely:

"This story is entirely off the record until the respective heads of government have announced it to the world. I pledge each one of you, on his honor as a correspondent and as an assimilated officer of the United States Army, not to communicate the results of this conference — or even the fact of its existence — until released by PRD, SHAEF."

None of us objected. This condition merely restated the formal pledges under which we were permitted to cover military operations.

Each agency was to file a 25-word bulletin, then the bulk of its story. The bulletins would move in sequence of filing priority, followed by the body of the stories, in sequence.

Dispatches were to be brought back to the Army communications center in the Scribe, the only transmitting point capable of handling great volume.

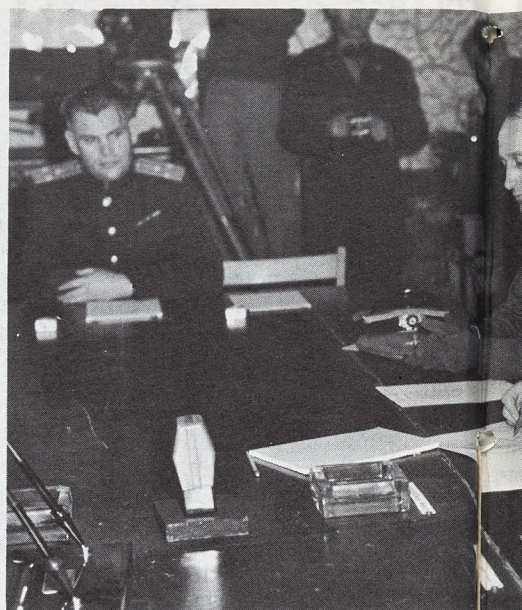
As our plane scudded among patches of sunshine and clouds — "a beautiful day to end a war" I wrote in my notebook — Allen added:

"You must not say anything to anybody until the release is made. And if the conference should fail — that is an absolute security stop."

Trucks toted us to the huge brick Ecole Professionnelle of Reims, where Eisenhower had his forward headquarters — and which had been German headquarters, too, during the occupation of France.

It was late afternoon and the Germans had just come in. Freddy de Guingand, Montgomery's Chief of Staff, had motored in from 21 Army Group with them just 10 minutes earlier.

Col. Gen. Gustav Jodl, German Chief of Staff and his aide, Major Wilhelm Oxenius, had arrived with General



SURRENDER: Col. General Gustaf Jodl publishes his statement in SHAEF war room at Reims. "With his signed armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into our hands." Later. At his left is Gen. Adm. von Friedeburg, Oxenius of German General Staff.

de Guingand. He went at once to the previous delegate, Admiral Georg von Friedeburg, Commander in Chief of the German Fleet.

We'd heard rumors of what had been transpiring during the previous few days. The Germans had made several passes at a unilateral surrender to Montgomery. Broad hints were made that we ought to team up and stop the onrushing Russians.

We soon knew much more as we were briefed in a small map room by two first class reporters in uniform, Lt. Col. Burrows Matthews, formerly of the *Buffalo Courier-Express* and SHAEF communications officer, and Lt. Col. Frank Pawley, former news editor of the *Daily Telegraph* of London. (Burrows is gone now but Frank is managing editor of the *Telegraph*.)

The air ops map on the wall was stopped at May 5. The show was nearly over.

Maj. Gen. K. W. D. Strong, Ike's G2 and a fluent German speaker, led Jodl to the room occupied by von Friedeburg. The Admiral opened the door and exclaimed, "Aha!" The men exchanged neither handshake nor salute. They called for coffee and a map and the soldier who delivered them noted that Jodl was pacing the room.

The Uncertain Wait

Hours of uncertainty followed. From time to time we got crumbs of news or guidance. After the correspondents had been taken to the cafeteria for a fairly good American hamburger on a bun we discovered that the school building was besieged by a clamoring group of special correspondents from Paris, who had



I put his signature to unconditional surrender document with his signature the German people and the German delivered into the victor's hands," he said moments Friedeburg, German Navy, and at right Major Wilhelm (US Army Photograph)

hidden up in all manner of conveyance and were demanding to be permitted to cover. I recall going to the kitchen and getting them a heaping platter of hamburgers, which I passed through a window.

This filled some stomachs but satisfied no one's appetite for the story. However, SHAEF was adamant and the coverage party was not enlarged.

It was around 2 a.m. when we were conducted to the big map room where the surrender was to be made. Signal Corps cameramen had movie and still cameras in readiness, aimed at a conference table, 21 feet long and six feet wide.

We newsmen were herded behind a white line painted diagonally across the floor to keep us out of range of the recording cameras. (It was the bitter complaint of my children that when the press delegation was snapped I stood for history with my head behind the lens of a movie camera.)

I was busy noting details. For example, a handsome WAC officer with a decidedly non-reg blonde long hairdo and a beautifully tailored uniform. And I was learning that she was Kay Summersby, an English girl who chauffeured Ike's car and later wrote a widely-read memoir.

After the Allied delegates had been seated, Strong led the Germans in. Jodl sat with von Friedeburg at his left on one side of the black-topped oak table. Opposite them was Lt. Gen. Walter (Beetle) Smith, Ike's Chief of Staff, who would receive the surrender. French, British and Russian officers were ranged down both sides of Beetle and at the

ends.

Our eyes repeatedly sought Gen. Ivan Susloparov, whose face bore a faint, enigmatic smile. The Russians were a key. What measures had been used to induce them to this table one could only guess. Certainly we had persuaded them that we intended to get a German surrender on the eastern as well as our front. Only later did we learn that the Big Three — Churchill, Truman and Stalin — had agreed to hold up release of the surrender news until it was evident that Nazis were surrendering on the Russian side.

Jodl signed at 2:45 a.m. of the 7th of May. He scrawled his last name only with a tan fountain pen handed him by Ike's aide, Capt. Harry Butcher, who quickly recovered it. In 16 minutes everyone had signed. Jodl stopped drumming the table with his fingers and stood up, asking to speak.

Beetle was a man with an ulcer and it was active that night. He glared at Jodl with tired eyes from an ashen face, then nodded.

"I would like to say a word," Jodl said in German, turning his watery, red-rimmed eyes to those at the table. Then in a voice close to a sob he went on:

"General, with this signature the German people and the German armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victor's hands.

"In this war, which has lasted more than five years, both have achieved more than perhaps any other people in the world.

"In this hour I can only express the hope that the victor will treat them with generosity."

As the Germans picked their way across the camera cables and left there was only a faint mutter of imprecation from those who had caught the meaning. Certainly no one of the 60 odd persons in that room would have dreamed at that moment how generous the victor would be!

The correspondents trooped up to Ike's private office on another floor. He sat in the movie lights writing on a piece of paper the official acknowledgement he would make in a few moments.

Strong lined up the Germans in front of Eisenhower's desk. Ike asked: "Do they know what they signed?" Before Strong could translate Jodl nodded, "Ja." Ike barked a few technical orders having to do with the transmission of surrender instructions and said, "Take 'em away!"

Just an Ordinary Man?

He sat a few pregnant moments, his bald dome bathed in the floodlights, evidently thinking as if his head would burst of the historic moment now at

hand. (Five years later he told me in New York: "I was looking into Jodl's face and thinking, he looks like any ordinary man, yet how could an ordinary man sell himself out to Hitler and help murder 15 million people?")

Then Ike broke the spell, leaped to to his feet with a grin and joined Susloparov in a boisterous bear hug.

After the formal statements, which were no greater nor less than most military pronouncements, the correspondents trooped back to the little map room we had occupied most of the night.

Allen informed us that the decision had been reached to hold up our story until 1800 hours Tuesday European time — about 39 hours away. I drew him aside and protested vehemently. We would be scooped by every rag-tag radio station and rumor factory in the world if embargoed until then. Allen told me: "I have told this to General Eisenhower and he has said that his hands are tied, that the decision on release was reached on a level very much higher than SHAEF."

Our plane could not take off from the unlighted Reims airport until dawn, so soon the room was filled with the clatter of portables.

As I wrote, my competitive filing plan began to take shape in my mind. I must be first at SHAEF communications desk on the mezzanine of the Scribe. Therefore I must be last on the truck at Reims so I could be first on the plane for Paris, so I could sit beside the door and grab the first jeep off the airport. I wrote the last of more than 5,000 words while Honk Allen stood in the doorway yelling at me to get on the tailboard.

It was an almost unbearable beautiful dawn, with great golden streaks shooting up among billowing grey and white clouds. The black humpbacks of military planes were silhouetted above a light ground fog on the air field like sleeping dinosaurs.

We were a silent group, each man searching for his own thoughts as the plane ground toward Paris. I found myself wrapped in a reverie of satisfaction over relatively little things — such as "Now the guys can go home. Now the guys can shave and get out of the mud. It's over. The whole bloody mess is over." The piece bulging my pocket was for them — the guys I'd covered in combat from Walcheren to Colmar. We all suffered a little from the disease of over-association.

I got my story into the box at SHAEF communications first, as I had planned, followed by Jimmy Kilgallen. While the sergeant was stamping "1" all over my copy and "2" all over Jimmy's, Ed Kennedy came up the stairs. Before the night was over he had set up his own ground rules and breached the embargo with a portion of his story. That was a long time ago but not long enough.

A TALK WITH GENERAL BRADLEY

By SAM KLEIN

By any measurement of a human being, Omar Bradley is an anachronism.

It is difficult to reconcile the man with his deeds, for by ordinary judgments, a life dedicated to a profession dealing in combat and requiring destruction at least once each generation should not produce such a man. But General Omar Bradley cannot be judged by ordinary standards.

The first thought that comes to mind after being ushered into his office at the Bulova Watch Company in New York, where he is chairman of the board, is "kindly." The spare figure, above average in height, the thinned white hair, the clear blue-grey eyes surrounded by crinkles, the ruddy complexion, and the firm handclasp, all combine to deny his 72 years of age. His manner is relaxed, benign and friendly. Such is the man who lived and suffered with his troops, whose respect and concern for them was returned in kind, who earned the unique accolade, "The Soldier's General," and of whom ally and enemy alike referred to as "the best field general in the American forces."

On V-E Day, Omar Bradley was commanding general of the 12th Army Group, composed of four field armies, and totaling more than one and a quarter million men. News of the surrender reached him late at night a day or so prior to May 8th at his tactical headquarters in Bad-Nauheim, deep in Germany.

"It's hard to realize that 20 years have passed since that time," he said in the characteristic, high-pitched voice that has traces of a Southern accent. "The first I knew was when Ike called me, and said, 'It's all over, Brad.' As fast as possible after his call, I relayed the news to all unit commanders in our Group, ordering the cessation of all hostilities. My main feeling at the time was to prevent any further killing than was necessary."

The General admitted to some difficulty in detailing his exact feelings at the time of the surrender. "I had seen it coming for quite some time before," he said, "so that about the only thoughts I can recall now are, 'well, it's done, I'm glad it's over' and 'they're really licked this time.'"

Asked what he meant by "this time," General Bradley explained that, as a major in 1918, he had seen Germany emerge at least physically intact from World War I. "I came away with the impression that the job was not finished. No warfare had been conducted on German soil, and most of the suffering and

tragedy had occurred and been endured in France and Belgium. This time, however, the destruction of cities in Germany was complete for all practical purposes and everyone could see that they really were finished."

Yet, during his passage through Germany, Bradley recalled, he often was asked by Germans why the Allies were fighting Germany, when rather they should be helping them against the Russians. "My usual answer to such people was, 'Don't you remember, you attacked Russia and you declared war on us?' They never asked twice."

To the question of when he felt certain that the war was won, General Bradley replied that nothing could save the Germans in the West after the breakout at St. Lo on the Cotentin Peninsula in July 1944. From then on, he explained, it became a matter of time, with the Russians closing in on the Eastern front and the other Allies spreading across France into Belgium and Germany. "It was our feeling that the St. Lo breakout was the losing point, at least in the West and that the banks of the Rhine was the last defendable point for the Germans. After that, while there was continued fighting, sometimes heavy, there were definite signs of collapse and the end was in sight." That, he added, was why the actual surrender, when it came, was no great surprise.

General Bradley maintained that the Battle of the Bulge, with its cost to us, still was beneficial to the Allied side and its result was the shortening of the war by at least three months. When General Manteuffel committed his

forces, together with von Dietrich's VI Panzers, what significant German armed strength remaining in the West was destroyed.

These days, Omar Bradley, an honorary OPC member, commutes from his home in Washington to Bulova headquarters, with whom he has been affiliated since 1953, when he went off the active assignment list. As a five-star general, he is never completely retired from the Army, and occasionally is asked to undertake special assignments for the military.

Returning from Europe in July 1945, he remained based in Washington to become head of the Veterans Administration in November 1947, and Army chief of staff in 1948. In 1949, he became the first chairman of the newly-created Joint Chiefs of Staff and was reappointed for a second two-year term by President Truman. There he remained until joining Bulova, by "finishing my job on Saturday afternoon and reporting for work at the company Monday morning."

As to the future, General Bradley is cautiously optimistic.

Any worries of Germany becoming the aggressor again, Bradley finds unfounded. "While we cannot predict what the situation will be in 50 or 100 years from now, with the safeguards built into NATO and the existence of combined military staffs in Europe, such a possibility is remote. We live in different times now and the days of the independent nations living independently are past. Countries are going to have to live together, perhaps through mechanisms such as the UN, for they can no longer live apart."



INTERVIEW: The Bulletin's Sam Klein talks with Gen. Bradley about the end of the war.

MURROW

(Cont'd from page 1)

diagnosed as a hopeless case of cancer, Murrow expressed the desire to return to his home in southern New York to die.

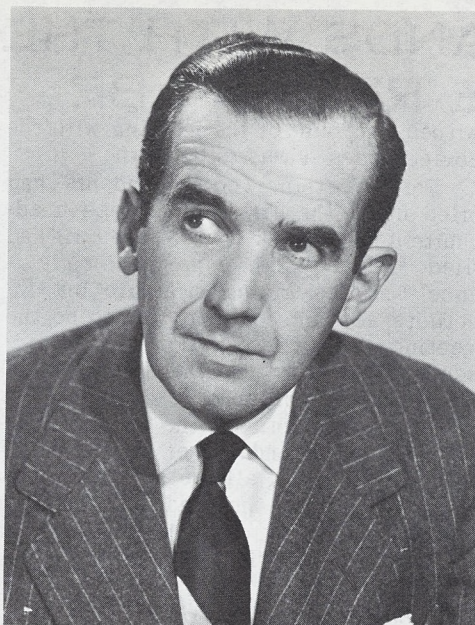
Ed Murrow achieved world-wide fame as CBS broadcaster in England when he described daily life during the London Blitz in 1940. After the war, after 18 months as CBS vice-president, he entered television in 1951 with the program, "See It Now," a CBS documentary. Later, he handled "Person To Person," a series of visits into the homes of celebrities and other figures in the news. In 1961, he was appointed to his post of USIA by President Kennedy and remained until ill health cut short his service in the government.

In accepting Murrow's resignation, President Johnson praised him for "a magnificent job." Johnson offered Murrow the thanks of a grateful president and nation, closing with the phrase made famous by the newsmen, "Good luck and good bye."

A six-time winner of the OPC Annual Award for his work in radio and TV, Murrow was voted into lifetime membership in the Club early last year by unanimous action of the board of governors. Among his achievements in behalf of the OPC was his service as organizer of the fund drive which resulted in obtaining the Club's 39th Street headquarters building.

Club president Barrett McGurn sent the following telegram the same afternoon when news of Murrow's death was announced to Mrs. Janet Murrow, the newsmen's wife, in Pawling:

WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS THE GRIEF OF THE MEMBERS OF THE OVERSEAS PRESS CLUB AT THE DEATH OF ED MURROW, SIX-TIMES WINNER OF OUR ANNUAL AWARD FOR



Edward R. Murrow

THE FINEST OF RADIO AND TV NEWSWORK AND MORE THAN ANY OTHER THE BUILDER OF OUR CLUB. ALL OUR 3400 MEMBERS JOIN IN PROFOUNDEST CONDOLENCES AT THE LOSS OF OUR DEAR FRIEND.

Calendar

All reservations will be charged to members' accounts unless cancelled in writing 24 hours prior to function

Wed., May 5 - Luncheon, with Lord Chalfont, British Disarmament Minister. 12:30 p.m.

Fri., May 7 - VE Day Plus 20 Reunion. Cocktails, dinner, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Tues., May 11 - Reading of "Post-Mark Zero" Robert Nemiroff's play to be produced this fall. 8 p.m.

Tues., May 11 - Book Night, with "Three Lives for Mississippi" by William Bradford Huie."

Tues., May 18 - French Regional Dinner, with cocktails beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Wed., May 19 - Luncheon, with Internl. Women's Airplane Races Group. (NY to the Bahamas). 12:30 p.m.

Wed., May 26 - Luncheon, Guenter Grass, author of new book, "Dog Years." 12:30 p.m.

Wed., May 26 - Bistro Bahamian Cocktail Party. Goonbay Music - Tropical Fun. 5:30 p.m.

Tune in at 10 p.m., Wednesday, May 5 for the OPC's "International Interview" program on WYNC Channel 31 (UHF), with Amb. Michael S. Comay of Israel. Repeated on WYNC Radio Friday, May 7, 4 p.m.

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Sam Klein,
Lawrence F. Mihlon

SO WE SHOOK HANDS WITH THE RUSSIANS AT THE RIVER ELBE

By JOHN WILHELM

The lead on my story that day concluded, "We shook hands on the east bank of the Elbe River this afternoon, and in the setting German sun behind us, one could almost see five and a half years of tragically destructive European conflict drawing to a close."

It was wild scene as I recall it now. Those shaking hands were the commander of Marshal Stalin's 58th Guard Division of the Ukrainian Army, and the commander of General Eisenhower's 69th Infantry Division, and they stood in the tall grass on the east bank of the river.

They, and no less than several dozen correspondents, had crossed the river in a small wooden racing scull inasmuch as the bridges were long since blown out.

We walked up a small path to a wooden barracks building, and there a hastily prepared lunch of fried eggs was served to the brass, with toasts of German schnappes, while outside Soviet soldiers enthusiastically hugged us, offered us schnappes from Jerry-cans, and borrowed rifles from our soldiers which they proceeded to try out by taking pot-shots at their own buddies across the river. Made for quite a laugh.

Once we had witnessed the meeting, identified the units, and hastily had our pictures taken with the Soviets as proof of our meeting, plus a quick trade of American insignia for some Red Star Army insignia, we crossed back to see if we could file our stories. It was a big story, and the competition to get it out to the waiting world — the first eye-

witness account of the meeting with the Soviet forces — was to be stiff.

For one thing, correspondents had piled up at the First Army press headquarters for a week or more, and all had filed "release when approved for clearance" stories giving strategic but indefinite accounts of what was to be the meeting with the Soviets. These accounts, written to the hundreds of thousands of words, were considered a protective measure by the keenly competitive correspondents of all the major wire services and all the specials, too. Under Army rules, they had to be cleared before fresh copy could be transmitted to waiting editors in London, New York and elsewhere.

John Mecklin, now with *Time*, but then on the *Sun*, and I had agreed to split the story, and we were side by side in the meeting with the Russians. John went to First Army to file his story, but I took a big chance and had my jeep driver head a couple of hundred miles down the autobahn to the Third Army press camp, completely denuded of correspondents as the word of the First Army meeting had gotten out.

Arriving about three hours later at the Third Army press camp, I was surprised to find I was the only correspondent there and the Prewi radio was standing idle (compared to the First Army radio which was deluged with over a million words.) I nervously inquired if the censors could clear my story on the meeting with the Soviets, and they said guidance had arrived permitting press clearance.

Naturally I was overjoyed. My story

V-E DAY REUNION ON FRIDAY

Six correspondents who covered the German surrender at Reims, France, on May 7, 1945, will take part in a panel discussion of that historic event at the OPC's "V-E Day Plus 20" Reunion to be held next Friday, May 7, at the Club.

Those invited are war correspondents and military public information officers who served in Europe (both the ETO and Italy) during World War II. Members of the War Department Bureau of Public Relations Alumni will join in the fun. OPC members and their wives also are welcome.

"Included on the "surrender" panel (with their 1945 affiliations) are Boyd Lewis, United Press; Jim Kilgallen; International News Service; Jean Le Grange, Agence France Presse; Price Day, Exchange Tele-

graph; Charles Kiley, *Stars & Stripes*, and Ralph Morse, *Life*. John MacVane, the NBC correspondent who covered the Fall of France as well as V-E Day, will serve as moderator for the discussion.

Several Army and Navy officers who held command assignments in the ETO and Italy will be the guests of the OPC Reunion Committee that night. Gordon Fraser, of NBC Monitor and also a former war correspondent, will serve as master of ceremonies for the evening's program.

An Open House party, the V-E Day event will start at 5:30 p.m. on the 10th floor. The panel discussion is scheduled for 7 p.m. An entrance fee of \$2 will be levied to cover music, hors d'oeuvres, etc. Reservations are required.



FIRST WORD on Russian-American conference at the Elbe River was filed by John Wilhelm for the Chicago Sun Foreign Service on April 26 — the week before VE Day. His was the first eye-witness account to reach American readers.

moved to New York and on to Chicago in a matter of minutes. It broke in a triple, eight-column banner headline in the *Chicago Sun* (now the *Sun-Times*), and I like to think it was the first eye-witness account of this epic meeting with the Soviets to reach the American public. As far as I know, it was.

STOOL PIGEON

(Cont'd from page 2)

and writing letters. What civilians we saw were haggard, beaten-looking and shuffling along with downcast eyes. Soldiers had been surrendering by the hundreds and thousands and they all looked in one of two ways — sullen or glassy-eyed with exhaustion. It was a pleasure to see."

"By May 5th or 6th, we all knew that some announcement was to be made very soon. When it did come, everyone sort of yawned, a bottle of wine was opened here and there, and went back to playing cards or walking around to hunt up something to do. It was just an ordinary day and everyone was kind of lackadaisical about the whole thing."

"The few pictures I took that day were sent back to headquarters by a foot soldier, accompanied by an MP who had a good road map in one hand and a sidearm in the other. I told them not to fly."